

EI-261

JACK (JACOB) GOLDNER

BIRTH DATE: APRIL 27, 1900

INTERVIEW DATE: 3/4/1993

RUNNING TIME: 1:05:00

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME

INTERVIEW LOCATION: DAUGHTERS OF MIRIAM HOME
CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA, 5/1994

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: PAUL E. SIGRIST, JR., 10/1994

AUSTRIA, 1921

AGE 20

PASSAGE ON "THE RYNDAM" PORT OF EMBARCATION: ROTTERDAM

RESIDENCES: AUSTRIA: TARNOV (GALICIA); US: New York

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm here today, it's March 4, 1993. And I'm at the home of Jack Goldner, Jacob Goldner.

GOLDNER: No, Jack Goldner.

LEVINE: Jack, okay, Jack Goldner, who came here to the United States from Austria in 1921.

GOLDNER: No, I really came in 1920.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. He came in 1920.

GOLDNER: Did they put 1920 on?

LEVINE: Uh-huh. You were then, uh . . .

GOLDNER: You see, it was '21, but I came, but I was born in April 27, on April 27th, so I still was twenty.

LEVINE: Yes. Well, you came in '21, but you weren't twenty-one years old, you were twenty years old.

GOLDNER: I was twenty years.

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay. And it seems as though you have a very interesting story, so let's start at the beginning. Where were you born?

GOLDNER: I was born in Austria. You want the country?

LEVINE: The country and the city or town.

GOLDNER: Oh. I was born in Tarnov, the city of Tarnov, and the country of Austria.

LEVINE: How do you spell Tarnov?

GOLDNER: Capital T-A-R-N-O-V, I think. (technical difficulties with the recording throughout)

LEVINE: Okay. And your birth date?

GOLDNER: Huh?

LEVINE: Your birth date. What date?

GOLDNER: Oh, date. I am born April 27, 1900.

LEVINE: Now, you must remember a lot about Tarnov.

GOLDNER: No.

LEVINE: No?

GOLDNER: No. Now, the reason why I don't remember about any city is because my father, when he became, he was transferred from line duty to financial duty.

LEVINE: In the army.

GOLDNER: In the army, a finance officer. And he was, and I really don't know any city where either I was born or any of my siblings, because he was transferred for one year in this city, another year in two cities, two years in this city. There was only one, two cities that he was longer, and the two cities were Stanislau and Rudki.

LEVINE: Would you spell each of those, please? (Mr. Goldner laughs) Or perhaps when we finish you can write them out.

GOLDNER: Stanislau. Capital S-T-A-N-I-S-L-A-U. And Rudki is capital R-U-D-K-I. Only in those cities, two cities, he was a little longer.

LEVINE: Well, tell me what your life was like growing up with

a father who was moving around so much.

GOLDNER: (he laughs) When my father settled down in Rudki . . . (tape is unintelligible because of technical difficulties)

LEVINE: (correcting the technical problem) It's fine now. Okay. So your father became a commandant.

GOLDNER: Yes. In other words, it isn't the same thing as a commander in the American Army or the British Army. He wasn't, in German when you say Commandant, he is a, he is the military, the top military leader of the city and all the environs. In other words, there were towns and villages and smaller cities. So he was the military head, military head representing the Austrian government, the Kaiser, the emperor. And they, and he was so honored. There were no separate buildings, a building or buildings for the military in Rudki, so he, his or he had a suite of three offices, three rooms, and a ground floor of the governor's building, where the governor was. You know, the governor. And that, they were twenty-five girls working in the various floors. There was a large building, a tall building, and they were Catholic. You see, to me, up

to date, what matters is the race, whether it's Catholic or Jewish or it's a male and female.

(he laughs) So the attraction is the same whether it's a Jewish girl or a Christian girl or, it doesn't matter. So that's what was my handicap here, because it's a very religious place here, Daughters of Miriam.

You probably know that. And I am not religious. So, I don't speak Jewish, I never did. My parents never spoke Jewish. My family . . .

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, tell me about growing up in Austria. Did you change schools a lot? Did you go to different schools?

GOLDNER: Well, most of my education was in the United States when I came. In other words, the, I had to take, for instance, in Rudki, if you take the city of Rudki. It was a small city, maybe six thousand, the population was only about six thousand. And my father had to take a teacher in Rudki and the books were imported from a larger city where they had higher education because I was so, and he taught me. And I also learned English. (he laughs) Maybe you remember, you read it there. I always was, wanted to, was wondering what it's all about really. Do I have

to . . .

LEVINE: Yeah. It's good to say it in your own words on the tape, uh-huh.

GOLDNER: In other words the, I was so anxious to learn English that when I came to, when I went to, ambassador? You know, when I was getting all the visas and the passport . . .

LEVINE: The embassy.

GOLDNER: What?

LEVINE: The embassy?

GOLDNER: Embassy. So I spoke to him a little English, so he said, "Well, what's your occupation?" So I said, "Well, I'm a student." So he shook hands with me and he commended me for it.

LEVINE: Do you remember when you were in Austria what experiences do you remember with your father? What were the kinds of things that you did together, or that he tried to do?

GOLDNER: Well, when I was seven, you see, because my father was a career officer and he made out so well in the army,

all the way up to captain, Commandant of the province, so I thought that I, that I will go follow my father's footsteps. So when I was seventeen I volunteered. In other words, they didn't take, they didn't draft boys until they were eighteen, but when I was seventeen, so I volunteered. And my father was sitting in the middle at the draft board and they were two officers, a First lieutenant and a second lieutenant and one military doctor was sitting around him. And they interviewed me, and I, whether anything is wrong with me, whether I'm actually willing. So I said, "Yes, I want to become an officer, a career officer like my father." So they passed me, and they, and here you saw me on a, because of my father I was, oh, yes. I chose an artillery regiment because it was stationed in Vienna, and (he pauses) we, well, describes in my book, you know, the, that I went first to Tyrol, you know, Tyrol in the Austrian Alps to learn to become a, gee, what is it? You know, where you go from mountain to mountain with a flag that you wave, and also the, it's described in the book.

LEVINE: You know, I think what would be better, Jack, is if I ask you questions. Because we're going to have your

book in the library. We don't need to sort of remember what you wrote there, and I'll ask the kind of questions that I usually ask, and then what's on the tape will be a little bit different from what's in the book. Somebody can read that. Okay? So why don't we say, well, first of all . . .

GOLDNER: Can I get my watch?

LEVINE: Yeah, sure. Wait, I'm going to turn this off while you get your watch. (break in tape) Okay, we're resuming now again after Jack gets back his watch. And why don't we, why don't you tell me your mother's name and her maiden name?

GOLDNER: My mother's name was Anna Krisnapoller.

LEVINE: Will you spell that, please?

GOLDNER: (he laughs) It's K-R-I-S-N-A-P-O-L-L-E-R. It's an unusual name.

LEVINE: What was your mother like? Tell me what you remember about your mother from when you were growing up in Austria?

GOLDNER: Well, since I was born, because, as you see, my father

was a officer already in 1905. So I was five years old. I was born in 1900. So I don't remember my father in any other uniform but officer's uniform. It's described in my book what he wore. Now, the, my, what did you ask me?

LEVINE: I asked you about your mother, what you remembered.

GOLDNER: My mother was a lady. She was, my father didn't, I mean, married. He was an officer. He was a captain already. Wait a minute. No. No, he was a young officer, I don't remember, but he was second lieutenant or something like that when he married. But later on, you know, when they were already married, so were they.

LEVINE: Can you remember any things that you did with your mother? The activities? Did you help her in the house, or . . .

GOLDNER: (he laughs) You see, an officer of the rank of captain has the privilege of having an orderly, a military orderly to do housework, shine our shoes, you know, do cleaning and so on. Now, because the demand for manpower to feed the army on the various fronts was the Serbian front, the Italian front, the Russian

front. So they were only too glad to volunteer to be a servant to the officer. Now, later on when we became six, seven years, seven, eight years old, so my father, my mother became very ill. We had also, four, a few siblings who died. They were born and they lived a few months or a few years, or two or three years, and they passed away.

LEVINE: How many siblings were there left that didn't die, that were alive?

GOLDNER: No, the ones who were living and who escaped to Israel were just my mother and my brother and my younger sister. Yeah, all of them. The whole family.

LEVINE: What was your brother's name?

GOLDNER: Huh?

LEVINE: What was your brother's name?

GOLDNER: Fritz.

LEVINE: Fritz. And your sister?

GOLDNER: (he laughs) My older sister was four years older than I and her name was Marie. And the younger sister was, well, in German was Hermina. You would pronounce

it in English "Hermina." I, did I tell you all three?

LEVINE: Two sisters and one brother.

GOLDNER: Yeah, living. And the others, the other siblings were, wait a minute. One, two, three. Either two or three, three I think, died. Well, you don't need their names.

LEVINE: No. Well, were you closest to any particular member of the family?

GOLDNER: I beg your pardon?

LEVINE: Were you closest to any particular family member?

GOLDNER: Well, I was very close with my brother, you know, for things that boys do. And I went skating with him and, well, there is, I don't think that it's in here, but it's in here, that the Russian Army invaded the province where my, where they were living. And the major general who was the commander of the division, you know, division, brigades and so on, regiment, so he sent a courier to my father to evacuate Rudki and go with his, oh, that was a platoon of soldiers stationed on the outskirts of Rudki with a second lieutenant in command, and they were under the command

of my father, and my father, whenever he needed them against the gendarmes or disobedience or something like that, he could send one of his assistants, who was the one who was a sergeant, one who was a corporal, that they were in the offices of my father, and they were teaching me, they were my instructors. So he sent them to the lieutenant for military help whenever there was subordination by the gendarmes, you know, we had gendarmes. Anything else? The . . .

LEVINE: Well, when you were in Austria did you have family gatherings? Did you celebrate different occasions?

GOLDNER: (he laughs) We had more family in the United States than we had, than I had known, I had known in Austria. The, I'm trying to think.

LEVINE: I think it was interesting what you wrote on your form about how you, what you thought about the United States when you were still in Austria. Can you recall . . .

GOLDNER: About the United States? Well, I had, I don't know how I got them. I think my father did all the purchasing for me, you know, books and so on. And I had magazines purchased by my father. I was getting

them all the issues that were coming out about the Wild West. (he laughs) Mostly about the Wild West.

The Indians, the buffaloes, the cavalry against the Indians. And I was, that's why I wanted to learn English. And when the Russian Cossacks, you know, on horses, that was the elite of the Russian Army, the Cossacks. When they were evacuating and going to Hungary at the order of the major general . . .

LEVINE: When was that? About when was that?

GOLDNER: Wait a minute. 1916? I think in 1916, around 1916. Wait a minute.

LEVINE: This was in the beginning of . . .

GOLDNER: It's in here. The details are in there, and they are accurate. So . . .

LEVINE: You were evacuated.

GOLDNER: My father ordered the lieutenant with the, with his platoon, to come and help with, you know, they send the train, a special train for us, and they were packing, taking our furniture as much as they could, you know, the valuables on the train. And also they sent a special train to take us to Hungary where the,

and they helped also to take over our belongings. And now the corporal and the sergeant who were in my father's office also went with us, and they took their motorcycle. (he laughs) So, and then when the train started to go we saw at a distance the Cossacks on their horses galloping after the train and shooting. (he laughs) But the conductor, or the machinist, you know, the engine machinist, speeded up the train to the utmost and we went so fast that in time we couldn't see the Cossacks any more. We were in the last . . .

LEVINE: The last . . .

GOLDNER: What do you call it?

LEVINE: Car, the train.

GOLDNER: Car of the train, so we could see, and it was open. We could see the Cossacks. So . . .

LEVINE: What about . . .

GOLDNER: And we went to Hungary, and we were there a whole year until, until the Germans, wait a minute. Until the Russian, wait a minute, I get mixed up with the countries. Until the Russian Army were pressed very

hard for help in other places, on other fronts. And they had to take their armies to that front where they were threatened, so they were just transferred there.

So then we could return from Hungary back to Rudki, and we found the building where we were living, which was next to the governor's building, destroyed. And we went to the ruins, my brother and I. We were boys.

I was, wait a minute. We were young boys. I don't remember. It's probably here.

LEVINE: You were about sixteen or something.

GOLDNER: And I found torn pages of my, of my magazines, the United States. You know, the Jack Carter and Sherlock Holmes. Oh, they, you know.

LEVINE: The cowboys and Indians book.

GOLDNER: You know, they were torn, they were scattered. And in Hungary, while we were in Hungary a whole year. And because of my father's rank he became the, he became, well, the so-called man in charge of the depot, the military depot where they have various military equipment, or they hope the things were, where the soldiers come from the fronts to leave their old equipment and they give them new equipment, machine

guns and rifles and all kinds of things. So he became the Commandant of the depot, and had two hundred and fifty soldiers assigned to him with the lieutenant to help him to run. They had to have the tailors and the shoemaker. They had all these people. (he laughs)
And the uniforms and rifles, all kinds of equipment.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

GOLDNER: Now, what I can say about Hungary, my brother and I had two girlfriends. (he laughs) He had, I had Margit, Elanca. My brother's girlfriend was about his age, about sixteen. Margitka, Margitka. My girlfriend was younger, my age, Elanca. I'm pronouncing it the way the Hungarian pronounce it, where the accent is on the first syllable. And they showed us around the city of Scenz, S-C-E-N-T-Z, I think. That was the city, which was the size of Rudki, also about six thousand, but was more modern. And they had ballfields, soccer. Soccer, I used to play soccer, the American football soccer. I'm describing it here. And the, and we were there a year, and then when the Serbian, when the Russian Army was driven out we went back. And then, and I was

working, because the sergeant was, or the corporal was transferred to the front duty in the army, so I wanted to replace him. First I was working for lawyers. I wanted to, and I learned how to type and all that, and I was, I'm describing it in here. And then when I went to the Serbian front, when I was seventeen years old. Seventeen, or sixteen? Yeah, seventeen. You see, I told you that before. So I was, they waited for me there. They were fighting. The top commanders were fighting. They wanted me, when they knew who I was, whose son I was, so everybody wanted me. So the commander of the regiment, a colonel, a full colonel, not lieutenant colonel, a colonel, he said, "Send them to me." And he spoke to me and he liked me so much that he said, "You'd better transfer other, to the major's and lieutenant colonels somebody else. I want me, him." And incidentally we were under the earth. The office of the colonel and his aide du camp. Am I pronouncing it right?

LEVINE: I know what you mean, aide du camp.

GOLDNER: Aide du camp, something. It's spelled aide du camp. It's so, they were under the earth. And the . . .

LEVINE: You mean the quarters were under the . . .

GOLDNER: His quarters, the quarters of the colonel, of the commander, with his aide du camp, the first lieutenant, who is, who was at his disposal, you know. And he liked me. (he laughs) So whenever I misspelled, of course, in German, when I misspelled something and the colonel was scolding me, so he was standing behind the colonel. And says, "Don't worry, he likes you." He told me later, "He likes you. Don't worry about it." Now, wait a minute. Am I going . . .

LEVINE: Well, let's . . .

GOLDNER: From one to . . .

LEVINE: Let's see. Why did your father decide to come to America?

GOLDNER: Oh. And he went back to Roumania. My father wanted, came to America because he just didn't, he didn't know where to be. In other words, he was in danger because the, uh, police sergeant, they were Polish, was his enemy. And they, and when the, when Austria lost the war, so he had to escape from there, from Rudki. As a

matter of fact, they came as soon as he went into Roumania because he was born in the province of Bucovina. Have you ever heard of Bucovina. That belonged to Roumania. That's why you have the postcard there from Roumania. So he had to escape because he was endangered by the, by the chief of the . . .

LEVINE: Polish police?

GOLDNER: Of the, I told you that before. No, it isn't that. Gendarmes.

LEVINE: Gendarmes.

GOLDNER: Yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, we're not . . .

GOLDNER: Now, as a matter of fact they came to look for him and they made a mistake as far as the name is concerned, and they took me prisoner. And they took me prisoner to, from Stanislau to Rudki, and they put me in jail, and the jail was below the governor's building. And then the next morning, and they, this describes my whole, my being in jail and being helped by the, by the older people, men, you know, to get food, to get

to the window, the window with the grating on it and so on. And then, and then the next morning I was asked to come before the first lieutenant of the Polish Army to, and he said, "Are you Major Goldner? You couldn't be. You're too young." So I said, "No. I am his son, Yacob." They pronounced the Jacob "Yacob." So he said, "Well, I'm sorry." You know, he was honest. He was sitting in my father's office. (he laughs) And he said, "Make papers out for discharge." That I can go free on a train, go back where I came from.

LEVINE: Now, when your father came to the United States . . .

GOLDNER: Oh, yes. He came to the United States because he thought that maybe, because his family was there. We had more family in the United, in New York, than we had in Austria. So then, his sister, his two sisters, he was the youngest. So he had two older sisters in New York. And then, and he thought that perhaps he'll be able to get a job and make a living. But he couldn't.

LEVINE: Now, did you come with . . .

GOLDNER: Because he couldn't speak English. In other words, if you didn't know how to speak English, then you had to

do menial work, you know. Just . . .

LEVINE: Did you come with your father?

GOLDNER: No.

LEVINE: When he came, he came when?

GOLDNER: He came in 1919.

LEVINE: And you came about two years later.

GOLDNER: About, yeah.

LEVINE: So he came first . . .

GOLDNER: He came first.

LEVINE: And then what, what was the . . .

GOLDNER: And he . . .

LEVINE: Where did you stay when he . . .

GOLDNER: He left me with his sister.

LEVINE: Where?

GOLDNER: With Aunt Molly, in New York.

LEVINE: No, but when your father came to the United States and

you were still in Europe . . .

GOLDNER: Yes. He wanted to go back because the, the Roumania took over the province of Bucovina where he was born. So, in other words, doesn't matter where you were born, no, wait a minute. Doesn't matter where the children were born, like we, it's where the father was born. So, in other words, we had the right to come to Roumania. And the reason, your question was . . .

LEVINE: I asked where did you stay, you and your family, when he came?

GOLDNER: Oh, yes, yes. Now, he was staying with his older sister who was my Aunt Molly, and then, when the Roumanian government, who participated in winning the war, they joined, Roumania joined the Allies and they won the war. So they were giving pensions to, and he was in Roumania. He was not in Galicia. He was in Roumania, my father. I told you this. So they said that all the officers, not the soldiers, ordinary soldiers. What are they called? Commissioned. All the commissioned officers will get half pensions for life as far, as long as they live. Half pensions of what they were getting before. So that's why he went

back. So he came, he came here and he was living with his sister, Aunt Molly. And then he left me, and I, with Aunt Molly, I mean, at his place.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. So, he came here, then he went back to get his half pension.

GOLDNER: Right.

LEVINE: And then . . .

GOLDNER: And he, and he remained there. Then he remained there until he died in 1960, I think.

LEVINE: And then when did he come back? When did he go back to Roumania?

GOLDNER: When?

LEVINE: Yeah.

GOLDNER: Almost immediately.

LEVINE: Oh.

GOLDNER: About 19, uh, 1920, about 1922.

LEVINE: I see. So you and your mother and your sisters and brother, you came to the United States while he was

still here?

GOLDNER: Only I.

LEVINE: Only you.

GOLDNER: Only I. My brother remained there in Roumania because he was, he had a degree at the University of Bucharest. Have you ever heard of Bucharest, the capital of Roumania? And he remained there. And my mother and my both sisters, my both sisters, went to Israel, immigrated to Israel, and they died there.

LEVINE: Did they . . .

GOLDNER: I'm the only one remaining.

LEVINE: Why did you come to the United States?

GOLDNER: (he laughs) I came to the United States much before they went to Israel.

LEVINE: Why?

GOLDNER: (he laughs) Because I love the United States. Because, as I said here, that I even knew a little English, and I, I just . . .

LEVINE: Weren't you in danger of being conscripted into the

Roumanian Army?

GOLDNER: Oh, well, yes, I think. Am I saying it? When I was still in Roumania, because, you know, I was in Roumania. I wasn't in Galicia already. I was in Roumania. Now, when I was in Roumania, so I was reaching the age of twenty, and they were drafting into the army boys twenty years old, and I was nearing that age. So I just escaped to the United States. And my, I remember my mother was running after, (he is moved) my mother was running after the bus.

LEVINE: When you were going to the boat?

GOLDNER: When I was going to the boat, yes.

LEVINE: So you took a bus, and you went . . .

GOLDNER: We were on the bus with this girl, with this family.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And they were leaving from the same place?

GOLDNER: They was, yeah.

LEVINE: And what was the name of the ship?

GOLDNER: I don't know if I'm pronouncing it right. Rijindam

[Ryndam].

LEVINE: R-I-J-I-N-D-A-M [Ryndam].

GOLDNER: Well, that's a, that's a, uh . . .

LEVINE: Dutch, I think.

GOLDNER: The Dutch pronunciation. Maybe I don't know how they pronounce it.

LEVINE: Well, that's okay. It was leaving from Rotterdam, and can you, tell me about your voyage.

GOLDNER: Well, this could not explain it. This explains it. I don't know. I think that if I was a young boy, I must have been very attractive to the female sex, to the female, to girls. And I was, and all the girls on the ship were, they just were running after me, you know, they, this doesn't tell you, but this tells you. And then there was a, you know, as I told you before, it's, sex is one thing, male or female, and the race is another thing. I mean, religion doesn't come into it. So the, so there are some Gentile girls were running, you know. You were looking for me, you know, you were running around the ship, and I was jogging. The, and the, finally I met those two girls, the two

sisters, and they, one of them has flashing eyes, you know, you know, and the, she was about nineteen, and the other one was seventeen. And I attached myself to them, and we became like a family. Their mother used to fix things when they were torn, my things, they were considering me like a family. And then later on when we reached New York and we were supposed to go different places, males and females, (he laughs) because we had to be deloused whether we had lice or not. (he laughs) And we had to be, take scrubbing, you know, and showers under supervision, and so we separated. And then, what was, what was the name of the older one?

LEVINE: Hilda was one, I think.

GOLDNER: She . . .

LEVINE: Hilda was nineteen, right?

GOLDNER: Oh, yeah, I think so. Hilda, and Julia was the younger one, when Julia was seventeen. Hilda was writing to me a whole year, letters. They went to Elizabeth, New Jersey, to their father, with their mother. And I was going to my father, who was still in New York, and Hilda was writing to me a whole, an

entire year. And my aunt forbade me to answer the letters. She says, "You cannot become involved yet. You are too young." You know, with girls. Because it leads . . .

LEVINE: Well, how . . .

GOLDNER: What?

LEVINE: How did you feel about that?

GOLDNER: I felt very badly, but I had to agree because, you know, girls, you probably know, matures, mature much quicker than boys. And I, at the age of twenty I was like a kid. I'm still like a kid. (he laughs)

LEVINE: But tell me your impression of Ellis Island.
Any . . . (technical difficulty with the recording)
. . . on time?

GOLDNER: I still have ten minutes.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Do you remember Ellis Island when you first arrived?

GOLDNER: Yeah. In other words, we have to swear allegiance. When they were all ready, and we were, we were supposed to be picked up by my father, but my father

couldn't come because he didn't, so my uncle came, my Aunt Molly's husband came to take me. So, uh, so then I was very bashful (he laughs) with girls. So then I kissed both, you know, and they separated, the two girls and the mother, and they separated. And then my uncle came because my father was working and the, and he doesn't know his way around, you know. He couldn't speak English. So my uncle came, and he picked me up. Was that the question?

LEVINE: Yeah. I wanted to know anything you remembered about Ellis Island.

GOLDNER: Oh, about Ellis Island. Well, we didn't go through the entire, you know, we just know, you know, where we came, what we were supposed to be scrubbed and washed and so on. So the rooms, and the, uh, and the, and then the hallway, when they were en masse as a group. We were sworn in to, sworn allegiance. It's hard. It's a place where people were sitting, benches and so on, seats, you know. There is nothing specific that I can remember about the Ellis Island itself. We, of course when we were coming to, with the ship to, so we saw the Statue of Liberty.

LEVINE: What was that like for you?

GOLDNER: Yeah, and then the Ellis Island. It was a building.

LEVINE: What struck you as different in your first few weeks in America?

GOLDNER: (he laughs) Well, the living with Aunt Molly, you know, there was a, my youngest cousin, my Aunt Molly's youngest son and I were sleeping in the same room and the, that's my daughter. (he shows a photograph) On the sixth floor, and they were, oh, they came a few years before, but they were in the fur trade, you know, furriers. So when I come and I don't speak English well, just a little bit, that wasn't enough, so I had to get a job. I owed, I owed money. You know, I borrowed money from, I borrowed, wait a minute. You know, you know enough what (?) means? A hundred dollars from her, my mother, when she was sending me, you know, from Roumania, despite (?). That's the money the, the name of the, of the so-called dollar, like, you know. Five dollars was mutter, fatter, and two dollars, and she a hundred dollars. A hundred and seventy-seven dollars, and I had to repay that.

LEVINE: Was your father living with your Aunt Molly in America?

GOLDNER: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what . . .

GOLDNER: And then, she was living with her, and when I came, and he was still there, so we had to take a room somewheres because she didn't have room for two people until my father left, and then I went in his place to Aunt Molly. And the . . .

LEVINE: It must have been very difficult for your father, because he had such a high position in Europe, and then when he came here . . .

GOLDNER: And he had to work in a factory. Sure.

LEVINE: Did he . . .

GOLDNER: That's why he went back to Roumania.

LEVINE: Did he ever discuss that with you?

GOLDNER: Sure. I know all about it. We were discussing everything. In other words, there were no secrets. And I was, when my father was, when the Roumanian

government offered the pension to the commissioned officers, so he went back. And then I went back, I went to Aunt Molly. But when we were together there were two people, and she had no space for it. So she said that there is in a block, in the same block in New York there were, there was a friend who also came years ago who spoke English quite well. And so he had a room that he gave it to us free of charge. But with a proviso that who he could keep, he was making cider, and the, there was Prohibition. And the, uh, and the, uh, cider was on the borderline whether it's alcohol or not. So he said if he can keep two large bottles of cider under our beds, so he'll give the room for nothing. (he laughs) So we didn't have any money, so he said, "All right." And nothing happened. And then when my father was offered the pension and he went back to Roumania, where he died in 1960, so he was sixty. 1960. No, he was sixty years old. I don't know what year. So the, so I went in his place, and I was in the same room with my cousin, Herb, this cousin, Herb Gold.

LEVINE: And then you worked as a furrier? Did you work in the furrier business?

GOLDNER: What?

LEVINE: Did you work in the fur business?

GOLDNER: Yes. Well, the only thing I could do is to work in the fur business. But one, two brothers were in business, so I was working for them. Two first cousins of mine, they were brothers. So I was working for them. And the, I became like the, like the floor chairman, whatever they call, I think chairman. You know, I told them, you know, when to stop, you know.

LEVINE: Like the manager, the floor . . .

GOLDNER: Yeah. Like I am under the owners.

LEVINE: Yeah.

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

GOLDNER: So the, so, in the meantime, I was going to school in the evening. I was going to Morris High School. Are you acquainted with, it was in the Bronx, I think, Morris High School.

LEVINE: Vaguely, I am.

GOLDNER: I started, I had to start from scratch. I had to start in the public school. What, but I started with the sixth grade in public school at the age of twenty. And I had such luck with the teachers. I don't know why, but they liked me. The, so I became so proficient and so advanced so quickly that the teacher took me by the hand. She was about your height. I was small. I'm five feet tall. Took me by the hand and took me to the principal. And he, and she said that I am, I am much ahead of the other students, that she recommends me to put me into the graduating class, which was the eighth, eighth year. Now, from the way I graduated the class, they all started, that started. Then I went to Morris High School, then I went to NYU, no, wait a minute. I went to Columbia, Columbia University. And then I met another girl with whom I fell in love. (he laughs) A beautiful blonde. It's in here.

LEVINE: Well, let's, we're getting late now, because I know you have to go.

GOLDNER: Yeah.

LEVINE: Let's just, let me ask you one last question. What do

you think, what influence do you think your early life growing up in Europe and Austria for your first twenty years and then coming here, what impact do you think that has had on you as a person?

GOLDNER: I'm an American. I forgot the languages. I don't know the Polish, I don't know the Roumanian, I don't know the German. I can't, I understand, but I can't really converse in German. I think in English, when I sleep . . . (he laughs)

LEVINE: You dream in English.

GOLDNER: Only English. And the, and that's why I didn't want to live with Aunt Molly, because with Aunt Molly I have to speak German. And we, and, or Jewish. I don't, I can't speak Jewish. I never learned Jewish. My family never spoke, my parents or anybody in Europe, they didn't speak Jewish, that I knew.

LEVINE: Just, before I close, tell me your wife's name, and her maiden name.

GOLDNER: Oh, I married, my wife was born in New York. And the . . .

LEVINE: Her name?

GOLDNER: Martha Mazie.

LEVINE: M-A . . .

GOLDNER: M-A-Z-I-E.

LEVINE: And your children's names?

GOLDNER: My children's names, my son, who is now fifty-one, I see him very seldom. He has a Japanese girlfriend. (he laughs) So his name is George.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And your daughter?

GOLDNER: George Goldner. And my daughter married a boy who is the same age as my son, about fifty-one, who is Edwin, we call him Eddie.

LEVINE: And his last name?

GOLDNER: Edwin J. Sheldon, S-H-E-L-D-O-N.

LEVINE: And you have grandchildren?

GOLDNER: My grandchildren, Lauren is now at Cornell University, a sophomore, and my son, my grandson over there, you see, this is my grandson. (he shows photographs) (technical difficulty with the recording)